

10534

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

May 18, 1965

"I am a working mother and the sole support of two small children. Being separated from my husband for the past year and a half and not being able to afford the rentals in private housing, I recently made an application for the Breukelen housing project. Both my children attend nursery school there, for which I have only the highest praise, while I work. I am presently living in a two-family house in Canarsie for which I am paying \$100 monthly. This does not include utilities. I have only three small rooms and my children (a boy and a girl) must sleep together.

"As I get no support from my husband I find it quite difficult to pay this high rent on my weekly salary of \$70 and still have enough left over for the necessary essentials to provide for my family.

"At first I applied for public assistance but was turned down for various reasons, among them that my rent was too high. They even suggested that I move to a less desirable neighborhood. I have lived in Canarsie most of my life (it is one of the few neighborhoods in Brooklyn that is not a slum) and have no intentions of moving to a less desirable neighborhood.

"I was told by the manager of the housing project (I never got as far as an interview) that I was unacceptable due to the fact that I was separated from my husband and under the age of 45, I am 25. He said that they felt I would have undesirable visitors and throw wild parties. (I fail to see what age has to do with it.) They said if I were to reconcile with my husband I would be eligible. If that were the case I would have no need for public housing.

"It is unfortunate that my marriage did not work out, but I certainly do not consider my family a problem nor undesirable because of it. I keep a clean and decent house and am always on time with my rent and am quite sure that even my present landlord would recommend me highly to the housing authority and could certainly tell them I have neither undesirable visitors nor wild parties.

"I am only anxious to move into the project because I desperately need the extra room and so that my small income will allow me to provide the things my children need.

"I have recently written to the housing authority requesting a more logical explanation for being turned down. But as yet I have received no reply.

"I can only say that I would have to answer 'yes' to No. 13 on the problem check list, but I can't help but wonder if I were to take the advice of the department of welfare and move to a slum area so my rent would be less, how many more conditions on the list I would have to say 'yes' to."

(Mr. MULTER (at the request of Mr. FARNSELY) was granted permission to extend his remarks at this point in the RECORD and to include extraneous matter.)

[Mr. MULTER'S remarks will appear hereafter in the Appendix.]

PERSECUTION OF SOVIET JEWS

(Mr. RODINO (at the request of Mr. FARNSELY) was granted permission to extend his remarks at this point in the RECORD and to include extraneous matter.)

Mr. RODINO. Mr. Speaker, the Subcommittee on Europe of the Committee on Foreign Affairs is holding an important series of hearings on conditions in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe,

with particular emphasis upon antireligious activities. The problem of Soviet anti-Semitism has been of concern to me for a long time, so I was glad to have the opportunity to present testimony on this situation. I would like at this time to have my testimony printed in the RECORD:

STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE PETER W. RODINO BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE, MAY 17, 1965

Mr. Chairman, Soviet persecution of religion is a fact that is known by every man, woman, and child who has had even a minimal exposure to the political doctrine and history of the Soviet Union. However, not all people, Mr. Chairman, are aware of the extent to which Soviet persecution is directed at its Jewish citizens. For this reason I believe it is altogether fitting and indeed timely that this Subcommittee on Europe of the House Foreign Affairs Committee should consider the problem of Soviet anti-Semitism.

In examining this problem the first question that comes to the fore concerns the validity of the oft-repeated charge of Soviet anti-Semitism.

Let me say at the outset that there can be no doubt of the validity of this charge. In every area of Soviet life the Jew suffers the most serious forms of discrimination and persecution. In the religious realm, he is denied the adequate services of religious leaders owing to severe restrictions on rabbinical training. Religious books, Bibles, calendars, and the like are also denied the Jewish believer. The number of synagogues has been reduced over the years. Cemeteries have been desecrated; synagogues defiled; and Jewish religious leaders persecuted.

In the economic realm, the Soviet Jew experiences the same far-reaching effects of anti-Semitism. He is denied those positions in the Soviet economy that bring greater responsibility and prestige to the individual. He has also been charged with so-called economic crimes and has suffered harsh prison terms and even death.

In the realm of culture, the Soviet Jew is a man culturally deprived. His language and literature are clearly destined for destruction and extinction. And in the universities and institutions of higher learning the Jew runs head on into a policy that is intended to reduce his access to learning. Deprived culturally and intellectually, the Soviet Jew is thus clearly being directed toward an inferior status in Soviet society.

All of this discrimination, Mr. Chairman, is carried on within a political system that is intended to deprive nationalities of their rights. And it is carried on within an atmosphere of engineered propaganda that is calculated to resurrect all of the hate symbols of the past and stigmatize the Jew as a pariah in the Soviet social body.

Yes, Mr. Chairman, there is discrimination against the Jews in the U.S.S.R. The Soviet leadership in fact and in theory is determined to destroy the idea of Jewishness as a separate national identity; it is determined to destroy Jewish culture; it is determined to carry on a cold war against the Soviet Jew until at last, deprived of all those sources of cultural, religious, and national survival, he becomes a total Soviet person.

It is because of this existing campaign of discrimination against and persecution of the Soviet Jew, Mr. Chairman, that I have submitted H. Con. Res. 223, condemning Soviet anti-Semitism, and asking that Soviet Jewry and all other nationalities of the Soviet Union be given the free exercise of their religions and of their cultural pursuits. This is not an exceptional request. All we ask is that the Soviet Union conform to those commonly held standards of decency and humanity.

NATIONAL MARITIME DAY

(Mr. MURPHY of New York (at the request of Mr. FARNSELY) was granted permission to extend his remarks at this point in the RECORD and to include extraneous matter.)

Mr. MURPHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, Saturday, May 22, of this week is a most important date in American history. This day has been proclaimed annually by the President of the United States for many years as National Maritime Day for this day marked the sailing in 1819 of the SS *Savannah* from Savannah, Ga., for Liverpool, England. The U.S. merchant vessel *Savannah* was the first steamship in the world to cross any ocean. With that crossing an era of history came to an end. Sailing vessels immediately became obsolete and the United States through ingenuity and inventiveness opened a new field of transportation.

I should like to point out that in the year 1819 for this country to be able to place upon the seas a new mode of travel is an achievement that would be comparable today to placing a rocket upon the moon. In honor of this occasion, the Maritime Administration and maritime industry are celebrating Maritime Week commencing May 17. During this week, many events will take place in the city of Washington. On Monday the 10,000-ton schoolship, the *State of Maine*, the largest vessel ever to navigate the Potomac River, with 350 cadets from the 4 merchant marine academies, will arrive at the Navy yard.

Tuesday morning the Vice President of the United States will present a \$500 award to Nelson Hagamen of Snyder, N.Y., the winner of the National High School Maritime Poster Contest, in the Senate rotunda. The winning poster is now appearing on mailtrucks throughout the United States. Numerous events will take place during this week culminating with a lifeboat crew race on Saturday between the academies at Haines Point.

It is hoped that these events will serve to inform the public of the need for a U.S.-flag merchant marine. To a very great extent the development of the United States as the leading power in the world can be attributed to our utilization of the oceans. The principle that seapower, both merchant and Navy, is indispensable to the security and even the survival of the great nations is well established. Our national merchant marine policy as stated in title I of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936, recognizes that—

It is necessary for the national defense and development of its foreign and domestic commerce that the United States shall have a merchant marine—

(a) sufficient to carry its domestic waterborne commerce and a substantial portion of the waterborne export and import foreign commerce of the United States and to provide shipping service on all routes essential for maintaining the flow of such domestic and foreign waterborne commerce at all times;

(b) capable of serving as a naval and military auxiliary in time of war or national emergency;

May 18, 1965

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

10533

who look to the housing authority and its low-income housing program for survival—and these are the people the authority has not been able to help. Here, in the last of five reports on the crisis and inconsistency in the city's public housing program, Barry Gottehrer and Tim Hutchens restate the problems and offer possible solutions.)

(By Barry Gottehrer and Tim Hutchens)

"The housing authority is not a private real-estate operator; it is a public body. It cannot select only healthy normal families as its tenants. Its obligation under the law is to provide housing for low-income families. Among these, and among families it displaces when clearing slums, there are families with problems."

This statement was written in 1958 by the citizens' housing authority—and brought in its current chairman, of the housing authority's attitude toward the problem families of the city.

This indictment is even more valid today. In fact, not since the late 1950's when a series of investigations forced a total reorganization of the New York Housing Authority—and brought in its current chairman, 75-year-old William Reid—has the program and the concept of public housing caused such widespread concern.

Increasingly since 1961, when a seldom-discussed set of eligibility standards was first adopted to include factors other than need and income, the housing authority has taken upon itself to ignore the troubled people of this city who need adequate, low-income housing the most.

For these people who qualify for public housing by virtue of their need and their income but fail to clear the authority's restrictive 30 hurdles, there is no chance of escape.

"It's a welfare and social problem," says William Reid. "They have to learn to live in public housing before they move into the projects. We can't take care of everybody and we have to draw the line somewhere."

THE 300,000 "INELIGIBLES"

Welfare Commissioner James R. Dumpson, however, remains convinced that these problem families must first have new housing before they can be helped.

And, while these two city agencies play hot potato with one of the city's most critical problems, the city administration, which is responsible for coordinating its departments, has continued to ignore the problem—and the number of "ineligibles"—the city's unwanted people, continues to grow.

Last summer, Roger Starr, executive director of the Citizens Housing and Planning Council, estimated that there were approximately 300,000 "ineligibles" among the 1.5 million people forced to live in this city's slums and rat-infested tenements.

Another housing expert said yesterday that the number of "ineligibles" was steady "considerably higher."

Yet this problem—this assignment of a segment of the city's population to a life in the slums and the additional problems that this life breeds—is only one of a handful the housing authority and the city have failed to resolve.

"When a businessman makes a mistake, he admits it and starts again or he eventually will have to pay the consequences," says one former housing authority official. "It doesn't work that way in this city. The mayor doesn't tolerate problems or admissions of failure. So the housing authority can't admit their problems and come up with a new program. But that doesn't mean that one isn't needed. It is needed desperately—but the housing authority isn't about to come up with solutions that might cost them their own jobs."

THE PUBLIC IMAGE

To the three men who run the housing authority and the mayor who appointed

them, there is really only one problem with the city's public housing program—money or lack of it.

"If we had enough money, we could build enough to take care of everyone," says Ira S. Robbins, one of the authority members. "But we've got to change the image of public housing. If we could only get the correct image of public housing to the public, they'd know differently and we'd have the money we need. The housing program must be larger. We are geared to build between 20,000 and 25,000 apartments a year and we've only averaged 5,000 a year over the last 7 years."

New Yorkers, however, apparently don't agree. In November, they rejected a proposition that would have provided an additional 7,000 public-housing units in the city.

And President Johnson's recent housing message—which would provide 3,000 more public-housing units for the city each year and was called grossly inadequate by all city housing officials—has brought increasing pressure on the authority to reexamine its position.

When the problems and the failures of the housing authority were detailed in four reports starting last Monday in the *Herald Tribune*, Oscar Kanny, public relations director for the authority, commented, "If the authority was given equal space, the newspaper would look bad."

This was on Monday. At that time, the authority was given the opportunity to answer the following charges and contradictions of their program:

An increasing payroll (more than doubled in the past 7 years) versus curtailed building (in the last 7 years the authority put up nearly 14,000 units less than it did in the previous 7 years).

An enabling concept that public housing is to take care of the city's impoverished people versus 30 hurdles which exclude most of the people who are the most impoverished.

A persistent plea for more Federal, State, and city aid versus an expenditure of nearly \$23,000 last year to decorate four executive offices and two board rooms.

An authority statement that the housing projects are well integrated (40 percent white, 40 percent Negro and 20 percent Puerto Rican and other) versus a report that shows the individual projects, as of 6 months ago, were essentially mostly white or mostly Negro and Puerto Rican.

An authority statement that only 3 percent of the authority's tenants were problem families versus a former project manager's contention that most managers rarely report their problem families and that the problems total more than 40 percent of the families in some of the projects.

An authority claim that its projects are virtually totally occupied versus the authority's ability to find apartments quickly for tenants recommended by city officials and newsmen.

The authority's statements about the excellent maintenance of its 132 public-housing projects versus its unusual and rarely mentioned role as owner and operator of 40 slum tenements—some having pending violations dating back to 1962.

The authority's claim that it has taken care of all these violations versus the buildings department records which still show that 21 are pending.

The authority's habit of promising ultimate relocation into a project to those people it dumps into the slum tenements versus the authority's habit of forgetting about these people once they're there.

These are only some of the failings and contradictions that cloud the present and threaten the future of the city's desperately needed low-income housing program.

Every day since these housings started appearing in the *Herald Tribune* and every day since the authority spokesman implied that

the chairman would like equal space, the authority has been asked for a response.

Each day, the authority spokesman said the matter of an answer was still being considered.

SOME PROPOSALS

Finally, late yesterday, Oscar Kanny, the same man who on Monday said the authority would make the newspaper look bad if given equal space, said that the authority declined to "comment on the charges" and refused to offer any new proposals aimed at solving the city's low-income housing crisis.

Others—including Mayor Wagner and Milton Mollen, recently named housing and development coordinator—have already come up with some proposals of their own.

In a message to Governor Rockefeller last week, the mayor, who reportedly has asked Mr. Mollen to consider the problems of the authority, called for a State-subsidized program that would provide 60,000 middle-and-low-income housing units within 4 years.

Describing the city's housing problems as "ominous an alarming degree," the mayor asked for a legislative authorization of \$13.5 million annually in State funds to cover the interest on bonds to be sold by the housing authority which, he said, would then be able to finance construction of 17,500 new public housing units over the next 4 years.

The mayor's request would hardly scratch the surface of the problem according to the authority figures showing that it now has a waiting list in excess of 100,000 families.

An additional \$5 million request for rent supplements, half of which the State would share, represents a somewhat different approach to the housing problem—one favored by many critics of the authority's program.

This subsidy of up to \$500 a year for rent for families displaced by renewal or slum clearance would cover the difference between the rents they could afford and the rents asked.

In this way, lower-income families could be moved into middle-income housing—thought by many people to be a major step forward in breaking down the seemingly inevitable segregation of many public housing projects.

One of the most outspoken critics of the city's housing authority and its approach is James W. Gaynor, chairman of the State housing finance agency.

Under a program launched by his agency this week, 600 low-income families will be accepted as tenants in 12 middle-income housing projects in New York City.

"INELIGIBLES": ADDICTS—WORKING MOTHER, Too

(By Barry Gottehrer)

Since Monday, when "New York City in Crisis" started its reports on the housing authority, the *Herald Tribune* has received 40 letters expressing surprise over the existence of a seldom-discussed set of eligibility standards.

Referred to as the 30 hurdles of public housing, these standards were originally designed to keep problem families and criminals out of public-housing projects.

As one reader pointed out, "Who wants to live with drug addicts and murderers?"

Yet these hurdles do not only bar drug addicts and murderers.

They also keep out people with far less serious problems—ranging from poor house-keeping habits to a lack of furniture.

The following is one of the letters we received.

It is from a woman, who asked that her name not be used, a woman who has been unable to clear the hurdles to public housing.

The hurdle she hasn't been able to clear is No. 13—"Family With Minor Children Which Does Not Include Both Parents."

May 18, 1965

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

10535

(c) owned and operated under the United States flag by citizens of the United States insofar as may be practicable; and

(d) composed of the best equipped, safest, and most suitable types of vessels, constructed in the United States and manned with a trained and efficient citizen personnel. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States to foster the development and encourage the maintenance of such a merchant marine.

It is imperative that the Congress of the United States and the people of this Nation foster and maintain this policy.

Our merchant marine has contributed to our national well-being. It is a source of employment for thousands of our citizens—seamen, shipyard workers, chandlers, longshoremen, suppliers, and many, many more. And all of these people and corporations pay the Government his due each year in taxes. There is no free ride. The subsidized companies alone, which represent but one-third of our merchant marine, paid total taxes of some \$63 million in 1964, representing corporate taxes, personal income taxes withheld, and social security taxes. But, of perhaps even greater importance, our merchant marine has helped in the conservation of dollar exchange in ocean transportation, which, in turn, affects our balance of payments.

It is fitting and proper that this great industry be duly recognized throughout the Nation on Maritime Day.

VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION CLOSINGS

(Mr. HANLEY (at the request of Mr. FARNSEY) was granted permission to extend his remarks at this point in the Record and to include extraneous matter.)

Mr. HANLEY. Mr. Speaker, under the general leave to revise and extend remarks on the passage of the independent offices appropriations bill, I should like to say a few words on the amendments offered by the gentleman from Texas [Mr. TEAGUE], the distinguished chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and agreed to by the Members of the House.

Mr. TEAGUE requested that the House include in the budget for the Veterans' Administration funds sufficient to operate all of the facilities which the Veterans' Administration had recommended for cutback or abolishment. I supported Mr. TEAGUE's request because I know from our work on the Veterans' Affairs Committee that these closings are by no means finished business. It was my belief at the time of our hearings on these closings that such closings were ill-advised. The whole thrust of our hearings has borne out this contention.

I believe that the House of Representatives acted very wisely in providing funds for the operation of the contested regional offices, hospitals, and domiciliarys. The President has commissioned a panel to study the original Veterans' Administration order to close these facilities, and it would not be proper for the House to preempt the decision of that panel.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN SELMA

(Mr. FRASER (at the request of Mr. FARNSEY) was granted permission to extend his remarks at this point in the Record and to include extraneous matter.)

Mr. FRASER. Mr. Speaker, last March thousands of religious leaders from across the Nation responded to a call for help from Selma, Ala. In my own community of Minneapolis many responded, including my friend and neighbor, the Reverend Richard Griffis, pastor of the First Congregational Church in Minneapolis. His concern and the concern of all the others was expressed in that now historic journey to Selma to help arouse the conscience of a nation.

Yesterday I attended a luncheon in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Washington Chapter of the American Jewish Committee. The luncheon was dedicated to those religious leaders from the Nation's Capital who went to Selma; it also served to symbolize our Nation's gratitude to ministers and rabbis everywhere who took part in that march.

These expressions of gratitude serve to renew our commitment to human justice and equality. These expressions also serve as the most eloquent answer to those who have attempted to impugn the character and the moral commitment of the marchers.

The Right Reverend William F. Creighton, Episcopal bishop of the diocese of Washington, was one of those who marched, and he was the principal speaker at yesterday's luncheon. His talk dealt eloquently with the need for compassion. Under unanimous consent, I insert his speech at this point in the Record:

ADDRESS GIVEN BY THE RIGHT REVEREND WILLIAM F. CREIGHTON, D.D., EPISCOPAL BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF WASHINGTON, MAY 17, 1965

I'm going to speak this noon about compassion versus hardness of heart.

Through all the struggle for civil rights and for human freedom a great variety of principles have been considered. These has been the consideration of what is sometimes called simple justice, but which always proves to be not very simple at all. It involves us in the weighing of law against lawlessness, but also in the weighing of higher laws against lower laws, and in decisions that must ultimately be the decisions of conscience.

There are always moral considerations, the conflict between good and evil. There are deeply felt religious convictions. There are the considerations of patriotism, of our national purpose, of the directions in which we as a nation should go. Always, of course, there have been political considerations, and economic considerations. What will the ultimate conclusion be, or what will it cost, if I take this position or that.

But beneath them all and controlling them all there is the conflict between compassion and hardness of heart.

It's a commentary upon the sickness of our times that a compassionate man is so often held up as an object of scorn. Acts of compassion, compassion for neglected people who have been deprived of their rights, have sometimes been ridiculed and sometimes have been given evil names. One very prominent American not many months ago described men of compassion as bleeding

hearts, a phrase obviously intended as an expression of obliquity and insult. Apart from being, from a Christian point of view, somewhat blasphemous, this description, which was all the more expressive because it came out spontaneously in an interview, is all too typical. Anyone whose heart bleeds for those less fortunate than himself is to be scorned as soft or unsound or dangerous.

I would wish rather to go on record as saying that the only chance we have of providing equal justice for all of our citizens, of solving our social problems or our racial problems, problems of poverty, or unequal opportunity in employment and housing and education, lies with those whose hearts do bleed for every human suffering, at very human need, at every injustice suffered by a human person. We're not going to be the nation or the people we are capable of being until the men whose hearts bleed outnumber those whose hearts are hard.

Senator BYRD, whose position has such influence over our destinies in this city, was quoted recently as saying something that appeared to equate poverty with crime. According to the newspapers he said that poor people dislike being investigated just as criminals do. If this is really what he said this defines the issue with regard to the problems of poverty and crime, and of all human suffering and need. It is the issue between compassion and hardness of heart. It's a crime to be poor, and poverty and crime and all human need and loss and incapacity are not to be dealt with out of sympathy for the persons involved. They are to be dealt with always objectively, to be investigated and dealt with only if there is no possible way to avoid it. This is as cruel and as lacking in compassion as it would be to tell a man suffering from arthritis that all he has to do to be completely well is to go out in the garden and turn cart wheels. If Senator BYRD's heart, or the hearts of men of whom he is typical, ever bleed even a little bit for children who are neglected and hungry and educationally and culturally disadvantaged, or for mothers who cannot find the counsel they seek in a fat, selfish and hardhearted society, or for fathers who leave their families rather than deprive them by their presence, then we should begin to have a decent city.

All sorts of angry motives have been ascribed to those of us who went to Selma to help out our Negro brothers who have been unable to vote or to live full lives of creative work or of social or cultural opportunity. This is not a matter of pride or of self-satisfaction. It's no pleasure to have a bleeding heart, it hurts a great deal more than it does to have a hard heart. To be in a place like Selma, in our Nation, in the 20th century, and to see kind, good, warm-hearted Negro families constricted in a ghetto, an area in which the paved streets end, surrounded by troopers with cars parked bumper to bumper, with clubs and tear gas, allowing no more than three people out at a time, to see all this just because men like us wish to be free, makes one's heart bleed, bleed until one can feel the blood running down inside. What kind of a man is it, who after having merely looked at the television pictures of a bridge at Selma would not feel his heart bleed?

There are considerations of human justice. The ultimate issues, many of them will be settled in the courts. Let's remember again, however, that justice is determined and interpreted and enforced by human persons with regard to human persons. And let's remember that there are varieties of laws. The fighters for freedom this last year have stood clearly on the principle of non-violence against endless provocation. And over and over again in bombings, in beatings in murders, in incitements the hard of

10536

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

May 18, 1965

hard have relied on violence. And all too often in doing this they have claimed the support of law. Most recently we have seen the ugly spectacle of incitement and vicious racism expressed by a judge and a lawyer in a courtroom in Alabama in the case of the Klan member on trial for the murder of Mrs. Liuzzo.

There are all kinds of laws and there are degrees of justice. There always remain the difficult questions of conscience with regard to civil disobedience. And this is an area in which I personally should be fearful to have any but a man of compassion trespass. It is no area into which a hardhearted man or a man of violence is safe.

What do you do if you are driving along a highway and come to a lake and hear from the lake screams for help and see a child drifting away from a capsized boat. You rush to the lake, throwing off your coat, and prepare to dive in and swim out to rescue the child. But then you see a sign at the edge of the water signed by the sheriff, and the sign says, "Swimming in this is prohibited."

Do you put on your coat and go back to the car? Or do you see above the sheriff's sign a much, much larger sign that says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" or "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me"?

Yes, there are all sorts of laws and all sorts of ways to interpret them, and God grant that the day may come when all the signs will be put up, and all the interpretation of the signs, will be done by men of compassion, by men whose hearts bleed for those whose need is great. Only then will the very difficult problem of civil disobedience be concluded. So long as hardness of heart and compassion remain in conflict the problems of conscience are going to continue.

We people who have been involved in the struggle for human freedom and for civil rights can take no pride in it, and certainly no one who went to Selma is a hero. The real heroes are the Negroes who at such cost have in city after city sought to become full responsible members of a free society.

There is the question of justice, of the conflict between higher law and lesser law. There is even more deeply the moral conflict between good and evil. Who dares to say, and on what principles of morality, that it is a good or a righteous thing to say to a man that because of his skin color he cannot vote, or that he cannot live in a decent house, or that he cannot travel through our land, eating and sleeping decently in the accommodations that are provided for travelers, that he cannot have a good education or the advantages that others enjoy. Who dares to say that this is morally good?

It is an evil thing from the point of view of every moral consideration, and most certainly from the point of view of our whole religious tradition. The moral issues are quite clear cut, and on one side stand men of compassion and on the other stands hardness of heart. If this sounds smug or proud I certainly don't mean it that way. Could anyone see American citizens seeking day after day the right to register to vote, and being turned away by dishonest means, calling names so that they could not be heard, requiring tests that college professors might fail, and say that this is morally good? Or can any decent person fail to feel his heart bleed because of this? Could anyone have seen the Negro people of Selma jammed by the troopers into a concentrated area, gathering in the Brown's Chapel Church, singing freedom songs and hymns, praying in memory of Jim Reeb who was beaten to death only because he cared, and then say that there is no moral issue here?

Let's not be proud because we affirm the good against the evil, because we are on the side of moral decency. We had better

admit, all of us, that we have not been very strongly on the side of morality. In the civil rights issue most of us are Johnny-Come-Latelies, who have only recently waked up, and we haven't done much. Making a trip to Selma, or marching in a parade may be a good gesture, but it doesn't prove much.

We had better be satisfied to say that no matter where we stand we do know that until the moral conscience of our people develops a great deal more and becomes overwhelming, and until many more hearts bleed than are bleeding today, the forces of evil are going to continue free to bomb churches, to send out murder squads to shoot women, to refuse the right to vote, the right to equal employment, to equal housing, to equal education, to a full life. This is a moral issue, and none of us has been very moral about it. We've been all too willing to condone and excuse evil.

And then it is a deeply religious and a theological issue. For us it is not possible to say that the question of human freedom is essentially a political question, or an economic one, or a legal one; and that politics and economics and law are not the concerns of religion. It's impossible to say this, because if religion has any meaning at all it has meaning in the lives of people, all people and in every aspect of their lives. We believe very sincerely in the separation of church and state, but we don't believe at all in the separation of religion and life. And in the civil rights struggle lives are at stake, the lives of persons whom God loves, and whom He has commanded us to love. It is out of our sense of this judgment of God and the love of God that our compassion grows. Our hearts might bleed as pure humanitarians or as decent people, but because we are religious people our concern is greater than that of others, and no one should be surprised that religious people, religious groups, and religious leaders have taken a position of leadership in the fight for freedom.

Finally I would come back home. I've had my share of hate letters this winter, stacks of them, many of them anonymous and some too vicious and profane to be answered. Many others have been from sincerely troubled people who have wondered why all this can't just go away so that no one need be disturbed and no hearts need bleed. To be faced with a choice between compassion and hardness of heart is terribly difficult for many of our fellows who have never really chosen before or taken a stand, and who are embarrassed that others have. Those letters I've tried to answer courteously and with sympathy and in return I've often had courteous and understanding replies.

A very common refrain in the letters is the question, "Why don't you do something about Washington where poverty is a national disgrace and where crime abounds. Why should people like you go off to Selmas when your own city is a mess?"

And I've answered in two ways. First by saying that it has been the very people who have been most concerned here and who are working hardest to make our city a better place who have been concerned in the fight for social justice everywhere. It's the very people I have known here who have been fighting for a decent welfare program, for better education and better schools, for job opportunities and housing opportunities for Negroes and for all disadvantaged people, who went to Selma and who have felt their hearts bleeding for the poor and the hurt and the needy everywhere. These are the concerned people we find engaged in every sort of effort for human betterment.

And then I have said that far from resenting people elsewhere being concerned about our needs here, that I would do everything in the world to encourage such concern, honest concern that does not exaggerate our social problems, but which

does care for the Capital City of our Nation. We're dependent upon Congress and upon congressional committees and what happens here depends upon how much Senators and Representatives from all of our States care what happens here. If people such as some of those who have written me, unhappy because my heart bleeds for Alabama, would only bleed a little bit for our people here who live still in slums, who go to school in basements, who go hungry in the streets and fall so easily into crime because they do, then the light would begin to grow. If they would bring pressure on their representative in Washington, not to investigate poverty but to seek to end it, not to build aquariums and plant flowers while children go hungry, or not until they are fed, then we would be grateful indeed.

In the meantime I agree completely that we cannot go off to Selma or somewhere else to witness to our conscientious concerns, and do nothing about our needs here. It's all too easy to leave our comparative comfort here and go to Selma, through the police lines into the ghetto, to march thankfully to Dallas County courthouse and place a wreath in memory of James Reeb, and then fly back here to watch it all on TV. It's also too easy to live here in a comfortable neighborhood.

Even this, however, is a step in the right direction. It's a step in the right direction when we begin to know compassion, when we find that we can no longer put this out of our mind, when our consciences will not let us rest, when we discover that we can no longer be comfortable while others are in distress, when we begin to see poverty not as a crime committed by anyone other than ourselves who have permitted the social situations that breed it; when we can see that the school dropouts have dropped out because they know we'll never give them a break; so what's the use; when we see a mother wandering the streets seeking help for her children and dying in the process of rejection, as a woman rejected by us. When we begin to feel this and feel our hearts bleeding because of all of this, then our very discomfort may be the first step toward healing.

One can only wish that people like the mayor of Selma when they come to the Capital of our Nation, instead of seeking whatever they seek in the early hours of the morning, would find compassion in their hearts. One can only wish and pray that men in positions of responsibility instead of making fun of bleeding hearts, could find their own hearts bleeding just a little bit; one can only hope and pray that people everywhere may join in the battle with hardness of heart until we become a decent people who may not even see the sign that says no swimming, if they see someone struggling for life who cries for their help.

At the very end I'll add a note of really heartfelt optimism. The forces of compassion are growing and higher laws are winning over lower laws, goodness is winning over evil, morality is stronger than immorality. We can be thankful, very thankful, that we have a President who is a sincerely compassionate man, who does care, and who is also courageous and wise.

We can be thankful that a voting rights bill is surely going to pass, that forces of decency are emerging all over, in the business community of Alabama, in a coalition of conscience here in Washington, in a strong stand by decent men in Congress, in the leadership of our religious communities. Much good has come of Selma, much good. Even Governor Wallace is reported to have said recently in Selma that the day will come when Negroes will be free and will have a part in government. Of course they will, and this is no surprise to anyone but to Governor Wallace and his kind. A better day is coming; but it is coming only because